

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated May 13, 2008. Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 13 to 15, 17, 18 and 22 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 18 and 22 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 5, 7, 12 to 15, 18 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,182,069 (Niblack) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0025084 (Yang). Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Yang and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,330,001 (Nakao). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Yang and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,908 (Brown). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention involves using an image search apparatus to search for images. A plurality of images is stored. Partial images included in the respective stored images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored images. Features of the stored partial images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored partial images. A feature of a target image to be used as a search condition to search for the target image is received. An image including a partial image which contains the received feature is searched for as a candidate image. The candidate image is displayed, the partial image that contains the feature is enlarged, and the enlarged partial image, of the candidate image, is displayed onto the displayed candidate image.

Applicant submits that the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 18 and 22, and

in particular, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature of a target image to be used as a search condition to search for the target image, searching for an image including a partial image which contains the received feature as a candidate image, displaying the candidate image, enlarging the partial image that contains the feature, and superimposing the enlarged partial image, of the candidate image, onto the displayed candidate image.

Niblack is seen to disclose generating queries by dragging and dropping thumbnail images from an image characteristics window to an image query construction window. Based on definitions and information associated with the thumbnails in the image query construction window, a query is constructed for searching stored image data. The image characteristic values included in the query are compared against the values for the corresponding image characteristics contained in the stored image data, and stored image data corresponding to the query is displayed in a Query Result window. However, Niblack is believed to be silent on enlarging a partial image that contains a feature used as a search condition to search for a candidate image, and superimposing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed candidate image.

Yang is seen to disclose designating a specific domain of a display image for enlarged display, and transmitting a segmented image document necessary for constructing the requested enlarged domain. While Yang may be seen to disclose enlarging images, Yang is believed to be silent on enlarging a partial image that contains a feature used as a search condition to search for a candidate image, and superimposing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed candidate image.

Nakao is seen to disclose image position adjustment for letting a user adjust positions of two or more partial images of a subject to construct a combined image of the subject. Feature images are generated, which provide the user with clues effective for image position adjustment of partial images. The user selects a partial image as a target of image position adjustment, and a “display image” is generated using the corresponding feature image of the selected partial image. The “display image” has a same size as the selected partial image, and is displayed in front of other partial images.

On the other hand, the present invention involves receiving a feature of a target image to be used as a search condition to search for the target image. An image including a partial image which contains the received feature is searched for as a candidate image. The candidate image is displayed, the partial image of the candidate image that contains the feature is enlarged, and the enlarged partial image is displayed onto the displayed candidate image.

In contrast, Nakao is merely seen to disclose displaying a “display image” in front of a different partial image that is not included in the “display image”. Because the “display image” is the same size as a target partial image which has been selected for alignment with another partial image to construct a combined image, the “display image” is not an enlarged partial image. Thus, Nakao is believed to be silent on enlarging a partial image included in a searched for a candidate image, and superimposing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed candidate image.

Therefore, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature of a target image to be used as a search condition to search for the target image, searching for an image

including a partial image which contains the received feature as a candidate image, displaying the candidate image, enlarging the partial image that contains the feature, and superimposing the enlarged partial image, of the candidate image, onto the displayed candidate image.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 18 and 22, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Regarding a formal matter, the Office Action included a requirement to provide an English-language translation of the Japanese Office Action Dated October 19, 2007 in Japanese Application No. 2003-029668. It is Applicant's current intention to provide an English-language translation of the Japanese Office Action in a separate letter. Accordingly, however, if the Examiner reaches this case for action before the English-language translation has been received, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned at (714) 540-8700.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due. However, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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